(c) whether Government have taken any measure to check exploitation by foreigners who are visiting Indian in the name of research study and importing medicinal plants at a huge cost in the name of foreign origin; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The Indian Council of Agricultural Research has established National Research Centre for Medicinal & Aromatic Plants at Anand in Gujarat. The Centre is conducting research on all aspects of medicinal and aromatic plants. Multi-location and multi-disciplinary research is also conducted under All India Coordinated Research Project on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants having 11 centres located in State Agriculture Universities and ICAR Institutes. In addition, 8 ad-hoc projects are under operation at different centres of the ICAR.

(c) and (d) The Indian "Biological Diversity Act" of the Government of India has provisions to check exploitation of our genetic resources including medicinal plants by foreigners.

Growth of agriculture sector

2101. SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any meaningful growth in the agriculture sector is expected in 2003-04, if so, what is the basis therefor; and

(b) whether Central and State Government are contemplating fresh investments in the irrigation facilities to bring additional areas under agriculture and whether Government is considering crop diversification so as to make agriculture more remunerative for farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The favourable monsoon rainfall has boosted the prospects of higher growth in the agriculture sector in 2003-04. The rainfall in the country as a whole in July 2003, which is agriculturally very active, was 107% of the Long Period Average (LPA). The cumulative rainfall during the period from 1st June to 30th July 2003 was excess/normal in 32 out of 36 meteorological sub-divisions.

(b) As irrigation is a State subject, all types of projects for creating Irrigation facilities are conceived, planned and implemented by the State Governments through the State sector plan investments according to the priority of the respective State Governments. The Planning Commission has approved an outlay of Rs. 92,144 crore in the Tenth Plan for Irrigation and Flood Control under State Plan. In addition to the State Plan allocation, Union Government is providing Central Loan Assistance (CLA) to the States under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) since 1996-97 for expeditious completion of on-going Irrigation Projects. An amount of Rs. 11,542 crore has been released upto March, 2003 as CLA to the States under AIBP.

The basic aim of crop diversification is to protect the natural resources *viz* soil health and to avoid over exploitation of ground water. Accordingly, the States are being advised to increase area under pulses and oilseeds crops. The Central Government has been announcing relatively higher Minimum Support Prices for pulses and oilseeds with a view to making crop diversification more remunerative for the farmers.

Assistance to Arunachal Pradesh

2102. SHRI NABAM REBIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount granted to Arunachal Pradesh for development of Agricultural sector in the State during the last three years;

(b) the total amount utilized by the State Government against the allocated amount, year-wise; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to ensure cent per cent utilization of the released amount for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The Central Government released an amount of Rs. 37.26 crore to the Government of Arunachal Pradesh under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes during the years 2000-01 to 2002-03 and the State Government of Arunachal Pradesh reported an expenditure of Rs. 37.57 crore during the same period as per details below: